tioned by you. Dr. Alexander has been deputed to Mallappalli to investigate the disease known as "yaws". After his return, he will be sent to Alleppey.

As regards the appointment of a special officer for town-planning, your remarks are noted.

VI. PUBLIC HEALTH, MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND MEDICAL RELIEF.

2. MEDICAL RELIEF.

110. Administration of the Medical Department.

Mr. R. Narayana Pillai (Member, Vilavankod taluk) began by saying that medical relief, being essentially a charity of His Highness the Maha Raja, the poor had greater claims to it than others, but that fact was sadly forgotten by the officers who were in charge of the Medical Department. The Member then referred to a statement made by the Dewan in his first Address to the Popular Assembly that, since the appointment of Dr. P. N. Lakshmanan as the head of the Medical Department 'a great deal' had been done. With a view to disprove that statement, the Member dealt with certain features of the Medical Department. The first point he touched upon was the substitution of cheaper and ineffective medicines in the place of santonine and other effective worm-killing remedies freely distributed to the poor in the past. He also stated that pregnant women received little or no benefit from qualified midwives and lamented the want of accommodation available in medical institutions for poor women in labor. Though Government had admitted the scarcity of trained midwives, they were not prepared to accept a proposal brought in the Legislative Council for the training of a larger number of women in midwifery. Then he referred to the want of medicines of all kinds in the Government Hospitals and the inordinate delay in the supply of medicines from the Medical Stores. To illustrate this point he referred to an article in the *Trivandrum Daily News* which stated that certain school boys found on medical examination to be suffering from itch were sent to the hospital and they were sent back with chits to purchase medicines from medicine-vendors. He asserted that the transfer of Dr. Raman Tampi from the General Hospital to the Nayar Brigade Hospital and the posting of Dr. Ponnuswami Pillai to the General Hospital were not in the best interests of the people and that the arrangement had not given satisfaction to the public. Further, he stated that the X-ray Department had become a neglected chapter in the medical administration of the State. He also alluded to the punishment inflicted upon the Bacteriologist for refusing to dissect dead bodies when he was preparing vaccines for injection into living human bodies and characterised it as unjust and illegal.

The Member next spoke at length on the impropriety of posting male medical officers, especially young men in the Victoria Hospital, Quilon, and requested that the present medical man might be transferred from that hospital forthwith. He prayed for an assurance from the Government that, if the present women doctors there were found unequal to their duties, they would go in for abler women and never for young men in an institution where large numbers of girls were under training and their instruction included demonstrations on anatomy and physiology.

The Member then pointed out how poorly the disease known as "yaws" was treated in the Government hospitals and what amount of discontent was prevalent among the subordinates of the Medical Department on account of the freedom of private practice allowed to the head of the department and the position of undue advantage occupied by him in entering into unhealthy competition with his subordinates. The Member pointed out that in spite of repeated interpellations and discussions in the Legislative Council the administrative head of the Medical Department was still having private practice. He also added that the Hospitals for Mental Diseases and Lepers were mismanaged, without any regard to the welfare of the inmates and advocated the appointment of a board of visitors without delay. He objected to the location of the small-pox hospital in Quilon. He also criticised the circular issued by the Darbar Physician asking his subordinates to send a list of books they were reading and the power of the Darbar Physician to transfer officers drawing Rs. 200, and concluded that the administration of the Medical Department was not successful. He pointed out that it could not be understood why the travelling allowance bills of the Darbar Physician were immune from check.

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The next topic of his representation was the need for a Government dispensary at Kuzhittura and he urged the Government to open a hospital there without further delay.

In conclusion, the Member prayed that a Committe might be appointed to consider ways and means by which medical relief could be more efficiently administered with due regard to the feelings and sentiments of the people.

President's reply.—As regards the private practice allowed to the head of the Medical Department, as you pointed out, it formed the subject of an interpellation in the Legislative Council. The reply given by Government was this :—"Government have no information as to the practice obtaining in Madras. However, Government have understood that in Mysore the officer corresponding to the Darbar Physician is allowed to have private practice. Under the Travancore Medical Code, the Darbar Physician is not debarred from private practice." As a matter of fact, the Darbar Physician is approached only by those who prefer him to others. And I do not know whether it will conduce—I speak subject to correction—to the proper administration of medical aid, to lay down a hard and fast rule in this matter. In a matter like this where the health of the people is concerned you cannot lay down any definite rule.

Regarding the purchase of medicines, the Darbar Physician assures me that both foreign and local medicines are purchased with due regard to economy and utility.

Then you laid stress upon supply of the drugs for the removal of intestinal worms such as santonine, to the hospitals. The Darbar Physician tells me that santonine is supplied to all the hospitals in the State, as well as the indigenous drug which is effective and economic. It is used for the treatment of intestinal worms. It should not be confounded with hook-worms, with regard to which medical men have the choice of four drugs, each drug being chosen as the demands of the case require.

Then you said something about the Victoria Hospital at Quilon. The Darbar Physician submitted a scheme for training in midwifery of male medical officers of the Assistant and Sub-Assistant Surgeons' grade in the Victoria Hospital, Quilon, the Women and Children's Hospital, Trivandrum, and the General Hospital, after the opening of a lying-in ward there. The subject raised by your remarks is one which is under correspondence with the Darbar Physician.

You said something about the checking of the Darbar Physician's T. A. bills. You said that there was an order that they should not be checked. Let me inform you that there is no such order and that the Pre-audit Department is checking them.

As regards the board of visitors of the Hospitals for Lepers and Mental Diseases, there is a board of visitors for the Leper Hospital consisting of the Darbar Physician, the Chief Secretary and the Sanitary Commissioner. As regards the appointment of a board of visitors for the Hospital for Mental Diseases the question will be considered.

As regards the supply of medicines, the Darbar Physician assures me that medicines have been supplied to all hospitals.

Then you referred to an article in the *Trivandrum Daily News*. The facts as stated to me by the Darbar Physician are that some boys were asked not to attend school in order to prevent contamination. They went to the medical officer at Kottarakara. Some boys who said that going to the hospital was inconvenient were asked to purchase medicines. But the rest were treated in the hospital. There are no facts to corroborate the statements in the *Daily News*.

Regarding the establishment of a hospital at Kuzhittura, the Dewan has replied to a former representation as follows :—

"In regard to the hospital, that is an oft-repeated question. You have a well-conducted hospital at Martandam which is only within a mile from Kuzhittura. There does not seem to be sufficient warrant for a duplicate institution at Kuzhittura. You yourself say that medicines are distributed free from the Martandam Mission Hospital to the really poor. If the Mission Hospital refuses free distribution of medicines to *all* the poor, you may bring it to the notice of the Darbar

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Physician. There is also an Ayurvedic Dispensary at Kuzhittura receiving grant from the Government. Such of those as have a predilection for the Ayurvedic system of treatment may get treatment in that institution."

Subsequent to that, the question of the treatment of patients in the Martandam Hospital has been under correspondence. Your remarks with reference to the opening of a hospital at Kuzhittura will be noted in disposing of that correspondence.

III. Some observations on the Medical Department with special reference to the Kottayam District Hospital.

Rev. P. J. John (Member, Nominated) spoke about the defects of the Medical Department. The chief defects that he pointed out were :—

1. the unwillingness of the officers of the department to attend on patients who could not pay anything ;

2. the want of medicines in hospitals during certain months in the year—especially in the Kottayam hospital ;

3. the inferior quality of the medicines now supplied as compared with those supplied in former years ; and

4. the absence of the necessary instruments in certain hospitals.

The medicines due to the Kottayam hospital for 1099 were supplied in only Makaram last.

He also stated that it was reported that only the same quantities of medicines were supplied now as those supplied many years ago, although the number of patients in the hospitals had increased much. He requested the Government to see that the above defects were remedied as far as possible and also made the following suggestions for the improvement of medical aid :—

(1) employment of more European nursing sisters ;

(2) training of more midwives at the rate of one per each *pakuthi*, with a grant of Rs. 5 per mensem to start with ;

(3) prohibition of medical practice by quacks ; and

(4) employment of resident medical officers in all important towns such as Quilon, Alleppey and Kottayam.

Lastly, the Member referred to certain defects of the Kottayam District Hospital, such as the want of sufficient buildings, the want of a lying-in ward and the absence of water in the Hospital well during the summer season. He requested that medicines and medical instruments be supplied to that hospital direct from Trivandrum.

President's reply.—One of the important charges that you make against the Medical Department is the shortage of medicines in all hospitals of the State and the hardships caused to the subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja thereby. You say that medicines for the Kottayam hospital for the year 1099 were supplied only in the month of Makaram. The usual practice is to send the necessary quantity of medicines which would last for 12 months in one instalment. If the medicines sent to a hospital run short in any part of the year and if the Medical Officer in charge sends a supplementary indent for them, these medicines will be supplied from the Medical Stores. If there is shortage of medicine in a particular hospital, you cannot say that the Darbar Physician is not sending medicines to the hospitals. How can the head of the department know of this before he is informed of the same ?

With regard to the supply of surgical instruments, I may say that in all big hospitals they have been supplied, except a few instruments which are required for very rare operations, and those instruments, when required by the Medical officers who are in need of them, will be sent from here. Moreover, the Darbar Physician says that there is no use of keeping these costly instruments in all hospitals as they are not necessary.

With regard to your request for the construction of a lying-in ward, in the Kottayam Hospital I see that there is a recommendation before the Government from the Darbar Physician about the construction of a pay ward and a surgical ward.

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